

**REMARKS**

The Office Action dated August 16, 2004 has been received and carefully noted. The following remarks are submitted as a full and complete response thereto.

Claims 1-24, 31-48 and 51-55 are pending in this application and are submitted for consideration.

**Claims 1-24, 31-48 and 51-55 Recite Patentable Subject Matter**

Claims 1-24, 31-48 and 51-55 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Weinreich et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,175,831 B1, "Weinreich") in view of Mandyam et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,236,989, "Mandyam"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and submit that each of these claims recites subject matter that is neither disclosed nor suggested by the cited prior art.

Claim 1 recites a method of providing a multi-level hierarchical communications network comprising, among other features, the step of assigning specific access rights of varying levels to each entity, and the step of verifying the access rights assigned to the entities found in the search result.

Claim 9 recites a method of providing a networking database comprising, among other features, the step of assigning user access rights to each user profile.

Claim 14 recites a method of searching a network database comprising, among other features, the steps of: assigning access rights to the information relating to each entity in the first and second network database; associating a multibridge linking code with the second entity if the entity has criteria matching the specific data requirement from the second search; and retrieving the specific data by using the multibridge linking code.

Claim 31 recites a network database system comprising, among other features, means for assigning access rights to the information relating to each entity in the first and second network database, means for associating a multibridge linking code with the second entity if the entity has criteria matching the specific data requirement from the second search, and means for retrieving the specific data by using the multibridge linking code.

Claim 36 recites a system for providing a networking database comprising, among other features, means for assigning specific access rights to each user profile.

Claim 41 recites a communications network comprising, among other features, means for assigning specific access rights of varying levels to each entity, and means for verifying the access rights assigned to the entities found in the search result.

Claim 51 recites a method of optimizing networking capability comprising, among other features, the steps of: assigning a key to represent all the multibridge linking codes that have been assigned during the search; configuring the key to be passed between each entity in the hierarchical chain; using the key to contact the first entity in the hierarchical chain found during the search; using the key to contact the next entity in the hierarchical chain found during the search; wherein each entity in the hierarchical chain decides whether to forward the key to the subsequent entity in the hierarchical chain.

It is respectfully submitted that the prior art fails to disclose or suggest at least the above-mentioned features of the Applicants' invention.

In making the rejection, the Office Action cites column 2, line 10 through column 4, line 37 of Weinreich, and admits that "Weinreich does not disclose, ... assigning

specific access rights of varying levels to each entity; storing the information at the database; searching the networking data set to identify entities satisfying a specific criteria; and verifying the access rights assigned to the entities found in the search result. The Office Action further cites column 5, lines 5-40 of the Mandyam for curing the deficiencies that exist in Weinreich.

It is submitted that column 5, lines 5-40 of Mandyam merely presents the "Summary of the Invention" section of the reference, and fails to disclose or suggest each and every element recited in claims 1, 9, 14, 31, 36, 41 and 51.

In order to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, each feature of a rejected claim must be taught or suggested by the applied art of record. See M.P.E.P. § 2143.03 and In re Royka, 490 F.2d 981 (CCP 1974). As explained above, Weinreich and Mandyam, taken alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest each and every feature recited in claims 1, 9, 14, 31, 36, 41 and 51. Accordingly, for the above provided reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 9, 14, 31, 36, 41 and 51 are not rendered obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103 by Weinreich and Mandyam. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 9, 14, 31, 36, 41 and 51 are allowable.

As claims 2-8 depend from claim 1, claims 10-13 depend from claim 9, claims 15-24 depend from claim 14, claims 32-35 depend from claim 31, claims 37-40 depend from claim 36, claims 42-48 depend from claim 41, and claims 52-55 depend from claim 51, Applicants submit that each of these claims incorporates the patentable aspects therein, and are therefore allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to the independent claims, as well as for the additional subject matter recited therein.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

**Conclusion**

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that each of the claims 1-24, 31-48 and 51-55 recites subject matter that is neither disclosed nor suggested in the cited prior art. Applicants also submit that the subject matter is more than sufficient to render the claims non-obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art, and therefore respectfully request that claims 1-24, 31-48 and 51-55 be found allowable and that this application be passed to issue.

If for any reason, the Examiner determines that the application is not now in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the Applicants' undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this application.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension, together with any additional fees that may be due with respect to this paper,

may be charged to counsel's Deposit Account No. 01-2300, **referencing docket number 024430-00001.**

Respectfully submitted,



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